

NORTHWATCH

Date: January 9, 2026

To: Municipalities of Northeastern Ontario

From: Brennain Lloyd, Northwatch

Re: **Transportation of High-Level Radioactive Waste on Our Highways
Register Your Community's Concern by February 4th**

Earlier this week a [federal review](#) of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization's plan to transport, process, bury and eventually abandon all of Canada's high-level nuclear waste in northwestern Ontario was launched, with the first [comment period](#) closing on February 4th. Over these next several weeks it is important that municipalities register their interest with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and comment on the [Initial Project Description](#) now posted on the IAAC web site.

Of key importance: the NWMO is seeking to exclude the transportation of the high-level radioactive wastes through from the impact assessment process. In effect, that is excluding the concerns and voices of central and northeastern Ontario from the federal review. For us, it will be all risk, no reward, and not even the opportunity to have the impacts on our communities assessed in the federal review (expected to get underway in 2028).

Brief background: on November 28th 2024, after a multi-year siting process, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) [announced](#) that it had selected the Revell site between Ignace and Dryden as their intended destination for all of Canada's high-level nuclear fuel waste, coming from nuclear power generating stations in southern Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick.

This may not seem like a pressing issue for municipalities in central and northeastern Ontario, but it is absolutely an issue on your doorstep: The NWMO estimates that transportation of the current waste inventory will require **2-3 trucks per day** for more than 50 years. Those trucks will be travelling through or near your community as they make the (on average) 1,700 km trip from the reactors in southern Ontario (Darlington and Pickering Nuclear Generating Stations just east of Toronto the Bruce station in Kincardine in Bruce County) and the even longer distances from reactors in Quebec and New Brunswick.

There is substantial public concern with nuclear waste transportation because of the ongoing risk from the low levels of radiation that will be emitted from each shipment, and because of the risk of larger releases under accident conditions. The public rightfully expects this major component of the project to be thoroughly evaluated during the public assessment process.

In August 2025, the NWMO made it known that they were seeking to have transportation of the radioactive wastes excluded from the project's impact assessment process. However, for 20 years, the NWMO has been describing transportation as part of their project, and the Impact Assessment Act requires that activities that are integral to - or, in the language of the Act "incidental" to - the project be included in the assessment.

Impact Assessment of NWMO's Project Proposed for the Revell Site

On January 5th the federal review of the NWMO's nuclear waste project was initiated when the Initial Project Description (IPD) was [posted](#) on the Assessment Agency's website and a 30-day comment period began.



Initial Project Descriptions are the first document filed by a proponent in a [federal Impact Assessment Process](#), and the information included must meet specific requirements.

During this first comment period, feedback on the Initial Project Description should focus on whether enough information was provided. This is an initial project description and not a full impact statement (that comes at a later stage, currently expected to be filed in 2028) but should provide a comprehensive description, identifying all project activities and potential impacts (and how impacts are to be avoided or reduced).

Significantly, the NWMO has excluded long distance transportation from their Initial Project Description, consistent with their ambition to have transportation excluded from the impact assessment process.

Next Steps

As part of the current phase of the impact assessment process – referred to as the “planning phase” – comments on the Initial Project Description are the first step. Following that, the Impact Assessment Agency will release a “summary of issues” that should reflect what they heard during the comment period, and the NWMO must respond to that summary. Following that a set of draft guidelines (the guidelines will serve as instructions to the NWMO for their preparation of the Impact Assessment Statement) and there will be a second and final comment period for this phase of the process. We will write again when the comment period on the draft guidelines is announced; we expect it will be in the spring this year.

Here are three steps you can take as a potentially impacted or concerned municipality:

- Email the Impact Assessment Agency and let them know your municipality wishes to be added to the distribution list for the Impact Assessment of the NWMO’s project (Ref. #88774) (email nuclearwaste-dechetsnucleaires@iaac-aeic.gc.ca)
- Provide comments on the Initial Project Description by February 4th. We’ll be sharing more analysis in the coming weeks to support you in preparing comments, but your comments do not have to be long or complex; they can simply state that as a potentially impacted municipality you fully expect transportation to be assessed in the federal review process. You can post your comments to the review registry [HERE](#).
- Many municipalities have already passed resolutions opposing the transportation and burial of nuclear waste in northern Ontario, and we encourage all municipalities to take this step (in updated template is [HERE](#)).

Please let us know how we can assist you. We would be pleased to provide you with additional information and analysis, either through presentations to Council or more informally.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this detailed letter and the [backgrounder](#) on nuclear waste transportation.

Sincerely,
<Original signed by>

Brennain Lloyd
Northwatch

December 2025 Backgrounder on Nuclear Waste Transportation is [HERE](#)